ORIGIN/ACTION

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ARA	EUR	FE
NEA	CU	INR 5
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L 3	FBO	AID
H 2	S/S 10	S/P 1
AGR	COM	FRB
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TR	XMB	AIR
ARMY	CIA 20	NAVY 5
OSD 34	USIA 10	NSA 3

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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A-1393 NO. UNCLASSIFIED HANDLING INDICATOR 71

TO : Department of State

RECEIVED DEC 29 12 06 PM 1968

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

FROM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV DATE 9/22/82 AIVALY DATE: December 24, 1968

SUBJECT: Eban's Remarks on Liberty Claims

T. AUTH. REASON(S)

REF ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐

DECLASSIFIED ☐ RELEASABLE ☒

RELEASE DENIED ☐

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

On December 17, Foreign Minister Abba EBAN replied in Knesset interpellation to queries from several Members of the Knesset on the subject of the USS Liberty claims and with regard to allegations that the damage to the US vessel on June 8, 1967, had been due to American negligence. Eban's reply, as reported in the official Knesset minutes, was as follows:

"So far, the Government of Israel has paid the US Government an amount of $3,323,500 as compensation for the families of men killed on the American Navy ship 'Liberty' in connection with its being mistakenly damaged by the IDF on June 8, 1967. Israel paid the damages within a few months of the receipt of the claim.

"Israel undertook at the time (of the incident) to indemnify the US for the loss of life and property caused by the disaster.

"Israel paid the damages within a few months after the claim was presented in order to spare the bereaved families financial difficulties. The discussion of the further claim, for damage to the ship, was postponed by agreement between the parties until the US Government would have completed the preparation and presentation of all its claims of all kinds.

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Drafted by: POL:JPFreres:do 12/23/68

Contents and Classification Approved by: POL:HHStackhouse

Clearances:

"The presentation of the claim for damages is held up by the need to clarify medical particulars. The Government of Israel does not intend to raise in any way the possibility of demanding that the amount which has already been paid should be refunded. What has been said on the subject in the (U S) House of Representatives does not affect Israel's moral commitment.

"We know of no version about someone accusing the ship's officers of negligence. Even if there was such a claim, it does not affect the Government of Israel. The total amount to be paid by Israel will be established after further negotiations. ... The Government has no intention of withdrawing from its promise to indemnify the US for the damage to the 'Liberty.' As for the amount of the pending or still to be discussed claims, all questions concerning this will be clarified in due course in negotiations which will be conducted as agreed. I regard the painstaking fulfillment of promises and undertakings as a central principle of Israel's foreign policy."

BARBOUR